

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 and 25-27 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the title and claims 1-6 and 9 are amended. Claims 25-27 are added. No new matter is added by these amendments. Reconsideration of the application based upon the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 2, objects to the title as being non-descriptive. The title is amended to obviate this objection. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection of the Title is respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 2, objects to claims 2-6 and 9 for informalities. Claims 2-6 and 9 are amended to obviate this objection. Withdrawal of the objection to claims 2-6 and 9 for informalities is respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 3, rejects claims 1, 3, 6 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,549,737 to Sano et al. (hereinafter "Sano"). Additionally, the Office Action, on page 4, rejects claims 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sano in view of JP-A-10-282853 to Ishikawa. The Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

The Office Action asserts that Sano teaches many of the features as recited in the pending claims. However, Sano does not teach that a developer housing, including the second developer storage portion, is communicatively connected to a developer replenishment box, including the first developer storage portion; the ejection tray is disposed in an upper part of the developer replenishment box; and an upper surface housing of the developer replenishment box inclines in substantially the same direction as the ejection tray inclines, as positively recited in claim 1. Sano discloses a process unit consisting of a unit housing, a photosensitive member unit, a charging device and a developing device. Sano does not teach a developer replenishment box, as recited in the pending claims, where a

developer replenishment box feeds the developer trays located adjacent to the image carrying device. The single illustrative figure, Fig. 12, that the Office Action refers to in identifying an image forming apparatus, does not show (1) a developer housing including a second developer storage portion that is communicatively connected to a developer replenishment box; (2) the ejection tray is disposed in an upper part of the developer replenishment box; and (3) that an upper surface housing of the developer replenishment box inclines in substantially the same direction as the ejection tray inclines. Sano is silent regarding these features. Additionally, the applied prior art reference of Ishikawa, in any permissible combination with Sano, does not overcome the deficiencies, as discussed above.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action fails to support a *prima facie* case of anticipation and/or obviousness with either of the applied prior art references, for at least their failure to show the features as discussed above.

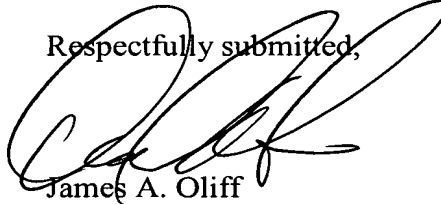
For at least the above reasons, neither Sano nor Ishikawa, in any permissible combination, can reasonably be considered to teach, or to have suggested, the combination of all of the features recited in at least independent claim 1. Further, claims 2-9 are also neither taught, nor would they have been suggested, by the applied prior art references for at least the respective dependence of these claims on an allowable independent claim 1, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §§102(e) and 103(a) as being anticipated by, and/or obvious over, either of the applied prior art reference, are respectfully requested. Additionally, claims 25-27 are in condition for allowance as they depend from an allowable independent claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-9 and 25-27 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Request for Continued Examination (RCE)

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